

REMARKS

Applicant believes that the comments that follow will convince the Examiner that the rejections provided in the March 8, 2012 Office Action have been overcome and should be withdrawn. Applicant submits that no changes to the claims have been made, and no new matter has been added.

I. THE EXAMINER'S REJECTIONS

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-16, 18-22 and 25-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bushold, et al., U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2004/0230481 (hereinafter "Bushold") in view of Zirngibl, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,836,527 (hereinafter "Zirngibl") and Quackenbush, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,512,964 (hereinafter "Quackenbush"). (Office Action dated March 8, 2012, p. 3).

The Examiner also rejected claims 6 and 17 as being unpatentable over Bushold in view of Zirngibl and Quackenbush and further in view of Trader, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,854,837 (hereinafter "Trader"). (Office Action dated March 8, 2012, p. 7). Finally, the Examiner rejected claims 11 and 22 as being unpatentable over Bushold in view of Zirngibl and Quackenbush and further in view of Lambert, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,282,649 (hereinafter "Lambert"). (Office Action dated March 8, 2012, p. 7).

II. THE EXAMINER'S REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bushold in view of Zirngibl and Quackenbush. Applicant respectfully disagrees and submits that the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the claim elements of the present invention. Specifically, combining the Bushold, Zirngibl and Quackenbush

systems would not produce the reservations and baggage system claimed in the present application.

Applicant has disclosed a novel system and method that allows a user to access an awards account, provide itinerary data, receive a plurality of itineraries, select an itinerary and book the itinerary using an awards account and/or payment. The system and method further allow a user to provide baggage data, to query a database for stored baggage information and receive baggage information from the system. The combination of these limitations is not taught or suggested by Bushold, Zirngibl or Quackenbush.

The Bushold System

Bushold describes a system that allows a participant to use awards points to make a purchase from a vendor system that accepts currency. (Bushold, Abstract). Bushold requires an application programming interface (API) to interface with the vendor's system, and a graphical user interface (GUI) to interact with the participant. (Bushold, ¶ 0005). The entire Bushold system is based on the use of a GUI by a user and the establishment of an API connection in an online environment through the Internet. Participants connect to the GUI via the Internet (Bushold ¶ 0024), and the API interfaces directly with the airline reservation system (Bushold ¶ 0025). Bushold does not teach or contemplate any other means of interfacing with customers or accessing an airline reservation systems.

Because the airline system does not accept the participant's awards points from the Bushold system, the Bushold system uses a "program account such as a cash account or a shadow credit card." (Bushold, ¶ 0025). To complete the transaction, the API purchases the airline ticket from the airline system using the shadow credit card.

(Bushold, ¶ 0026). Once the purchase is complete, the Bushold loyalty program deducts the appropriate number of rewards points from the participant's account. (Bushold, ¶ 0026). Thus, the Bushold system is completely independent of the airline's systems, but requires the airline to have its own system.

Applicant agrees with the Examiner that Bushold does not teach that the system used to interact with a user is an automated interactive voice response system. (Office Action of March 8, 2012, p. 3). Applicant also agrees with the Examiner that Bushold does not teach prompting a user to enter baggage data, acquiring baggage data from the user and querying a baggage database with the baggage data. (Office Action of March 8, 2012, p. 4).

The Zirngibl System

Zirngibl describes a system that provides real-time information to a traveler. (Zirngibl, Abstract). The Zirngibl system notifies a traveler regarding altered travel components and prompts the user to modify one or more travel components of the traveler's schedule. (Zirngibl, col. 4, lines 18-29).

The Quackenbush System

Quackenbush discloses a system in which an airline passenger's bags are picked up at the passenger's origin and delivered to the passenger's ultimate destination. (Quackenbush, col. 1, line 60 – col. 2, line 16). The passenger can access a website to check the status of the baggage. (Quackenbush, col. 3, lines 56-60). The baggage delivery services and website are separate and distinct from the services and website used by the traveler to book airline travel. During the reservations process, the traveler can

elect to have travel information passed from the reservations website to the baggage-delivery website. (Quackenbush, col. 4, lines 13-25; Fig. 3).

The Combination of Bushold, Zirngibl and Quackenbush Does Not Render Applicant's Invention Obvious

One of skill in the art would lack a motivation to combine the teachings of Bushold, Zirngibl and Quackenbush to produce Applicant's invention.

Bushold discloses the use of an API and GUI in an online system. Bushold does not teach or provide any way to implement the functionality of an API or GUI in an interactive voice response ("IVR") telephone system. Zirngibl discloses an information service that notifies customers of travel changes via an interactive telephone system. However, neither reference discloses how to implement the API or GUI of Bushold with an IVR system. The API and GUI of Bushold deduct a participant's award points and use a shadow credit card to pay the airline. The Zirngibl system merely presents a traveler an option to, for example, reserve a seat on the next available flight when the traveler's scheduled flight is cancelled. (Zirngibl, col. 13, lines 1-7). Zirngibl does not teach or suggest the use of a traveler's award points, does not teach or suggest an initial travel booking, and does not teach or suggest the implementation of a shadow credit card system to pay for a traveler's purchases. Thus, one of skill in the art would not consider the Bushold and Zirngibl references to teach or suggest the claimed use of an interactive voice response system.

One of skill in the art would not consider combining the Bushold, Zirngibl and Quackenbush references because the references teach away from a single, comprehensive system. For example, Bushold describes a system that is, by its nature, independent of the airline system. The Bushold system's purpose is to enable a customer to use third

party rewards points to book travel on an airline. The Bushold system pays for the ticket using currency. (Bushold, 0023, 0025). Likewise, the Quackenbush system is independent of the travel reservations system used to book an airline ticket. In the Quackenbush system, a customer first reserves an airline ticket online, and is then transferred to a different website to reserve the baggage delivery service. (Quackenbush, col. 4, lines 13-25). Fig. 3 of Quackenbush depicts the airline website and baggedirect website separately. Quackenbush specifically disclosed airline reservations and baggage delivery services using two separate systems. Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion in Quackenbush to provide a comprehensive system that enables a user to ticket or hold awards travel and that also provides information from a baggage database to a user. Finally, the Zirngibl system is directed to a real-time information service for travelers. After a person has scheduled travel, the person can sign up for a voice service under the Zirngibl system. (Zirngibl, col. 7, lines 13-26). Further, Zirngibl does not provide information regarding baggage. Thus, Zirngibl is directed to the specific purpose of providing informational updates to travelers as travel conditions change. There is no teaching or suggestion in Zirngibl of a comprehensive system capable of making initial reservations or providing baggage information.

Thus, combining the Bushold, Zirngibl and Quackenbush systems would not produce the reservations and baggage system claimed in the present application.

Applicant submits that the Bushold and Block references, individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1, and for the same reasons, claim 12. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of independent claims 1 and 12.

As claims 2-11, 13-22 and 25-26 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 and 12, respectively, they contain all of the elements and limitations of the claim from which they depend. Claims 2-11, 13-22 and 25-26 are therefore patentable over Bushold, Zirngibl and Quackenbush for at least the same reasons as independent claims 1 and 12. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claims 2-11, 13-22 and 25-26.

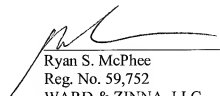
III. CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that the specification, drawings, and all pending claims represent a patentable contribution to the art and are in condition for allowance. No new matter has been added. Early and favorable action is accordingly solicited.

Should any changes to the claims and/or specification be deemed necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned to discuss the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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